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(54) Title: DIGITAL RIGHTS MANAGEMENT
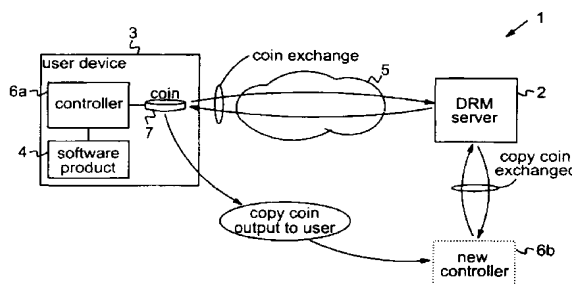
(57) Abstract: Software licence management systems (1, 50, 60) are provided in which a licence to use a software product (4, 55, 65) is represented by a data token (7, 56, 67). The systems have a software controller (6a, 52a, 62a) for controlling use of the software product at a user device (3, 53, 64), and a licence management server (2, 51, 61) for communicating with the software controller via a data communications network (5, 54, 63). The software controller (6a, 52a, 62a) allows use of the software product at the user device substantially only during a use period associated with a current data token (7, 56, 67) supplied to the software controller by the licence management server (2, 51, 61). An exchange token can be supplied to another, similar software controller when necessary to transfer the licence, e.g. in the event of a breakdown. The software controller (6a, 52a, 62a) is adapted to supply either the current data token, or the exchange token, to the licence management server (2, 51, 61) to be exchanged for a new data token. This is done in two circumstances: (a) to extend the licence for the software product beyond the use period associated with a current data token supplied by the licence management server; and (b) when an exchange token is received for transferring the licence from another software controller. The licence management server supplies the new data token to the software controller where it replaces the current data token. The new data token has a new use period during which use of the software product can continue. In circumstance (a) the licence is thereby extended, and in circumstance (b) the licence is thereby transferred to the new software controller. The system (1, 50, 60) also incorporates a mechanism to prevent or inhibit use of the software product (4, 55, 65) on multiple user devices at the same time.